

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 245536

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, PINT, PORG, IN, PK, BG

SUBJECT: THE SECRETARY'S CONVERSATION WITH SHAMSUL HUQ,
ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT OF BANGLADESH FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
OCTOBER 6, 1977

1. SUMMARY: SHAMSUL HUQ EXPRESSED THE HOPE FOR AN EARLY
MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENTS CARTER AND ZIA; INDICATED DIS-
TRESS OVER REPORTS OF RECENT STATEMENTS BY DEPUTY SECRETARY
AND AMBASSADOR GOHEEN ON INDIAN LEADERSHIP IN THE SUB-
CONTINENT AND NOTED BANGLADESH EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH GOOD
RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS, MOST NOTABLY BY THE RECENT
INITIALING OF A FARAKKA AGREEMENT. HUQ ALSO ASKED FOR AN
ADDITIONAL 250,000 TONS OF FOOD GRAINS IN FY 78 AND
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REITERATED THE BDG REQUEST FOR SOME EXCESS MILITARY EQUIP-
MENT THROUGH FMS. THE SECRETARY SAID WE WOULD LOOK INTO THE
POSSIBILITY OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS AND
STATED THAT WE BELIEVED STRONGLY IN THE SOVEREIGNTY AND
INTEGRITY OF EVERY STATE AND THAT THE IDEA OF HEGEMONY IS
NOT SUBSCRIBED TO BY EITHER HIMSELF OR THE PRESIDENT. END
SUMMARY.

2. THE SECRETARY MET WITH SHAMSUL HUQ IN NEW YORK ON OCTOBER 6. HUQ WAS ACCOMPANIED BY BANGLADESHI AMBASSADOR TO

THE UN KAISER, AMBASSADOR SIDDIQI AND MINISTER KABIR. ALSO PRESENT WAS COUNTRY DIRECTOR JANE COON.

3. HUQ OPENED THE CONVERSATION WITH A WARM EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION FOR THE MEETING, NOTING IT WAS THEIR FIRST MEETING AT THIS HIGH LEVEL WITH THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. HE REPORTED THAT PRESIDENT ZIA HAD VISITED CAIRO SEPTEMBER 24-26 AND EXPRESSED THE SINCERE HOPE OF THE BDG THAT THE SECRETARY WOULD SUCCEED IN BRINGING THE TALKS ON THE MIDDLE EAST TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION. THE SECRETARY RESPONDED THAT WE HAVE A CHANCE OF DOING SO ALTHOUGH THERE ARE STILL LARGE OBSTACLES, AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO CONVENE THE GENEVA CONFERENCE BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

4. HUQ CONVEYED PERSONAL GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT ZIA AND EXPRESSED HIS OWN PLEASURE AT THE ASIAN LUNCHEON HOSTED BY PRESIDENT CARTER ON OCTOBER 5. HE PARTICULARLY APPRECIATED THE PRESIDENT'S OPEN AND FRANK APPROACH TO PROBLEMS AND HIS CONCERN FOR HUMAN VALUES.

5. PRESIDENT ZIA WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE PRESIDENT CARTER TO
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VISIT BANGLADESH DURING HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT BUT IN ANY EVENT HE HOPES HE CAN MEET THE PRESIDENT SOON. SUCH A MEETING WOULD STRENGTHEN THE ALREADY WARM RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND WOULD BE USEFUL FOR THE STABILITY OF THE REGION. THE SECRETARY RESPONDED THAT HE WAS AWARE OF PRESIDENT ZIA'S INTEREST AND THAT WE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH AMBASSADOR SIDDIQI TO FOLLOW UP.

6. HUQ SAID THAT WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD BANGLADESH HAD ESTABLISHED GOOD RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING STATES AND WITH OTHERS, SUCH AS SAUDI ARABIA, EGYPT, AND CHINA. HE MENTIONED THE AVIATION AGREEMENT WITH BURMA WHICH FOLLOWED PRESIDENT ZIA'S VISIT AND THE PAKISTANI AGREEMENT TO TAKE BACK 25,000 NON-BENGALIS. WITH INDIA, THE TWO OUTSTANDING ISSUES WERE THE CROSS-BORDER INCURSIONS AND GANGES WATER. IN APRIL HE MET WITH PRIME MINISTER DESAI WHO REACTED POSITIVELY AND PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE ON THE BORDER INCURSION PROBLEM. MOST RECENTLY BOTH SIDES HAD INITIALED THE INTERIM FARAKKA AGREEMENT.

7. HE STRESSED THAT BANGLADESH WAS TRYING TO BUILD GOOD RELATIONS WITH INDIA, WHICH WERE IMPORTANT TO THE PEACE

AND STABILITY OF THE SUB-CONTINENT. IN THIS CONTEXT, HOWEVER, HE WAS SOMEWHAT DISTRESSED BY STATEMENTS OF SOME U.S. REPRESENTATIVES, MENTIONING SPECIFICALLY DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER AND AMBASSADOR GOHEEN, REGARDING INDIAN LEADERSHIP IN THE SUB-CONTINENT. HE REFERRED TO THE

POSSIBILITY OF LARGER POWERS TRYING TO DOMINATE OTHERS AND ASKED FOR ASSURANCE THAT IT WAS NOT THE U.S. INTENTION TO ENCOURAGE AN INDIAN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE OR HEGEMONY. THE SECRETARY STATED THAT WE BELIEVE VERY STRONGLY IN THE SOVEREIGNTY AND INTEGRITY OF EVERY STATE AND THAT THE IDEA OF HEGEMONY IS NOT SUBSCRIBED TO BY EITHER HIMSELF OR THE PRESIDENT.

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8. HUQ SAID THAT PRESIDENT ZIA PARTICULARLY WANTED TO THANK THE U.S. FOR THE 300,000 TONS OF FOOD AID PLEDGED IN THE LAST CONSORTIUM MEETING. THERE WAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT BANGLADESH COULD BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT IN FOOD; THE BDG HAS GIVEN HIGHEST PRIORITY TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND THEIR INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM NOW COVERED HALF THE COUNTRY. BANGLADESH HAD SUCCEEDED IN REDUCING FOOD IMPORTS FROM 2.2 MILLION TONS IN 1974-75 TO 800,000 TONS IN 1976-77. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF MONSOON FLOODS THIS YEAR AFFECTING PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, THEY NEEDED ADDITIONAL IMPORTS AND HAD BOUGHT RICE FROM THAILAND. THERE HAD BEEN SOME INITIAL MISUNDERSTANDING WITH AMBASSADOR MASTERS, PROBABLY BECAUSE THE BDG DID NOT PRESENT ITS POSITION IN A PROPER MANNER ABOUT THESE REQUIREMENTS. THE BDG WAS NOW PLANNING IN ADVANCE AND HAD BUILT UP STORAGE FACILITIES, BUT THEY REMAINED CONCERNED ABOUT ACQUIRING STOCKS IN CASE SOMETHING GOES WRONG. POLITICS REVOLVE AROUND FOOD IN BANGLADESH AND FOOD IS IMPORTANT FOR POLITICAL STABILITY.

9. THE SECRETARY INQUIRED ABOUT THE AMOUNT THEY MIGHT NEED, AND HUQ SAID THEIR REQUEST WAS FOR AN ADDITIONAL 250,000 TONS OF WHEAT AND RICE IN FY 78. AMBASSADOR SIDDIQI ALSO NOTED THE BDG REQUEST FOR RAW COTTON AND TALLOW. HUQ ADDED THAT THE COTTON WOULD BE USED BY EXISTING MILLS TO MAKE YARN FOR USE BY WEAVERS IN RURAL AREAS, MEETING THE BASIC NEEDS OF RURAL PEOPLE FOR EMPLOYMENT. HUQ MENTIONED THAT AMBASSADOR MASTERS HAD SUGGESTED THAT THE BDG LOOK INTO TITLE 3 POSSIBILITIES. HE ALSO SAID HE WOULD MEET IN WASHINGTON WITH CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS. THE SECRETARY SAID SUCH MEETINGS WERE IMPORTANT.

10. HUQ EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM (IMET) AND AMBASSADOR SIDDIQI REITERATED THE BDG
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REQUEST FOR CERTAIN EXCESS US MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT THROUGH FMS. THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT WE ARE TRYING TO CUT BACK ON MILITARY SALES, BUT WE WOULD TAKE A LOOK AT THEIR REQUEST.

11. HUQ NOTED THAT PRESIDENT ZIA HAS COMPLETED THE ELECTIONS TO LOCAL COUNCILS AND MUNICIPALITIES. THESE ELECTED BODIES PROVIDE THE INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR POPU-

LAR PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. ZIA IS DEFINITELY COMMITTED TO PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN DECEMBER OF NEXT YEAR. HE IS DETERMINED TO CREATE SUFFICIENTLY STABLE CONDITIONS SO THAT THE ELECTIONS CAN TAKE PLACE, RATHER THAN MOVE PREMATURELY AS DID PAKISTAN.

12. HUQ ASKED IF SMALL COUNTRIES HAD A CHANCE TO BE ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE SECRETARY RESPONDED, FOR OUR PART, WE LOOK FOR THE VIEWS OF THE REGION. HUQ NOTED THAT THE U.S. HAD GREAT INFLUENCE IN THE REGION. KAISER ADDED THAT THE JAPANESE MAY TRY AGAIN BUT THERE IS RESENTMENT IN THE ASIAN GROUP BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN ON BEFORE.

13. HUQ CONCLUDED BY INVITING THE SECRETARY TO VISIT DACCA AND THE SECRETARY SAID HE WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO COME SOME TIME. THE SECRETARY ALSO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE BDG INVITATION TO MRS. LILLIAN CARTER AND SAID HE UNDERSTOOD SHE HOPED TO GO.

14. BEFORE THE MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY, ASST. SECRETARY ATHERTON MET BRIEFLY WITH THE BANGLADESHIS WHO INQUIRED ABOUT PROGRESS TOWARD MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, MR. ATHERTON NOTED THAT OUR MOST-RECENT FORMULATION ON THE PROCEDURE OF A GENEVA CONFERENCE SUGGESTS BOTH PLENARY MEETINGS AND WORKING GROUPS. THERE IS STILL NO AGREEMENT ON WHETHER THE WORKING GROUPS SHOULD BE BILATERAL OR MULTILATERAL. HE STRESSED THAT WE HAVE NOT YET

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SOUGHT FORMAL ARAB REACTION TO OUR PROCEDURAL LATEST PROPOSALS FOR GENEVA DEVELOPED IN THE LAST MEETING WITH DAYAN, SINCE THEY HAD NOT YET RECEIVED ISRAELI GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT. WE WILL BE EXPLAINING THE PROPOSALS OVER THE NEXT WEEK TO THE ARABS. THE BANGLADESHIS EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE U.S. EFFORTS AND THE HOPE THAT THEY WOULD SUCCEED.

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